

Message Text

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12

ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 ADP-00 CIAE-00 PM-07 INR-10 L-03

NSAE-00 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 USIA-12 TRSE-00 MBFR-03

SAJ-01 SS-15 NSC-10 ACDA-19 OMB-01 RSR-01 /123 W

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R 131712Z JUL 73

FM AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8105

SECDEF WASHDC

INFO AMEMBASSY ANKARA

AMEMBASSY ATHENS

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

AMEMBASSY LISBON

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG

AMEMBASSY OSLO

AMEMBASSY OTAWA

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK

AMEMBASSY ROME

USMISSION NATO BRUSSELS

USMISSION EC BRUSSELS

USNMR SHAPE

USCINCEUR

C O N F I D E N T I A L BRUSSELS 3960

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PARM, NATO, BE

SUBJECT: VAN ELSLANDE JULY 12 SPEECH: DEFENSE ASPECTS

1. FOLLOWING SPEECH BY FOREIGN MINISTER VAN ELSLANDE TO FOREIGN PRESS UNION IN BRUSSELS JULY 12 (EMBASSY TRANSLATION FOLLOWS BY SEPARATE CABLE), HE WAS PARTICULARLY QUESTIONED ON DEFENSE ASPECTS WHICH WERE SALIENT ELEMENT OF HIS REMARKS. HE EXPRESSED CONFIDENTIAL

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OPTIMISM ABOUT PROGRESS TOWARD EUROPEAN POLITICAL INTEGRATION

AND STATED "IF THERE IS REAL INTEGRATION, DEFENSE CANNOT BE IMAGINED AWAY". AT THE SAME TIME HE EXPRESSED LESS CONFIDENCE THAT THE TIME TABLE AGREED AT THE PARIS SUMMIT COULD BE COMPLIED WITH.

2. ASKED ABOUT HIS INTERPRETATION OF THE JOBERT SPEECH BEFORE THE FRENCH NATIONAL ASSEMBLY, VAN ELSLANDE SAID HE HAD NOT UNDERSTOOD THE "PRECISE AND CONCRETE SENSE" OF JOBERT'S WORDS AND HAD INSTRUCTED THE BELGIAN AMBASSADOR IN PARIS TO OBTAIN MORE INFORMATION. HE SAID THAT THE JOBERT CONCEPT, WHATEVER IT WAS, WOULD REQUIRE DISCUSSION AMONG THE NINE ALONG WITH OTHER CONCEPTS OF DEFENSE THAT MAY BE ADVANCED.

3. RESPONDING TO A QUESTION ASSUMING U.S. DISENGAGEMENT FROM EUROPEAN DEFENSE, VAN ELSLANDE STATED THAT HE DID NOT BELIEVE THAT THE U.S. WOULD DISENGAGE, BECAUSE THE DEFENSE OF WESTERN EUROPE WAS IN THE U.S. SELF-INTEREST. THERE MAY OCCUR A "CERTAIN" DISENGAGEMENT IN TERMS OF THE NUMBERS OF TROOPS STATIONED IN EUROPE, AS A CONSEQUENCE OF AMERICAN INTERNAL POLITICAL CONSIDERATIONS. AS FOR THE NIXON-BREZHNEV AGREEMENT ON NUCLEAR WEAPONS, IT NEEDS MUCH MORE THROUGH STUDY. "I BELIEVE NOW, AFTER THREE OR FOUR CAREFUL READINGS, THAT ITS SIGNIFICANCE IS DIFFERENT FROM WHAT MY FIRST IMPRESSION OF ITS SIGNIFICANCE HAD BEEN. HE THOUGHT THAT MANY OTHERS IN EUROPE NEEDED TO RE-READ THE TEXT SEVERAL MORE TIMES AND THAT THEY NEEDED TO DISCUSS IT AMONG THEMSELVES AND WITH THE AMERICANS.

4. COMMENT: IN FOREGOING PARA VAN ELSLANDE APPEARS TO BE REFLECTING HIS CONVERSATION WITH AMBASSADOR. (BRUSSELS 3918), WHICH HAD TAKEN PLACE IMMEDIATELY BEFORE HIS SPEECH. HE WAS EVIDENTLY TAKING SERIOUSLY THE AMBASSADOR'S URGING TO STUDY THE NIXON-BREZHNEV AGREEMENT CAREFULLY AND HAD TO SOME EXTENT BEEN REASSURED ABOUT ITS OBJECTIVES. VAN ELSLANDE APPEARS TO HAVE EUROPEAN DEFENSE PROBLEMS VERY MUCH ON HIS MIND, SINCE THIS IS THE SECOND TIME IN RECENT WEEKS THAT HE HAS DISCUSSED THE IMPORTANCE OF A COMMON DEFENSE POLICY TO THE POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE NINE. IN HIS SPEECH TO THE BELGIAN PARLIAMENT ON JUNE 27 (BRUSSELS 3651) HE CHALLENGED THE FRENCH TO MAKE CONCRETE PROPOSALS ABOUT DEFENSE.

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